

Handling Chaos



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With Your Host

Brooke Castillo

Handling Chaos

Welcome to *The Life Coach School Podcast*, where it's all about real clients, real problems and real coaching. And now your host, Master Coach Instructor, Brooke Castillo.

Well, hello, my friends. Funny finding you here on a day that isn't Thursday.

I have decided that I am going to release a daily podcast for the next several days to help and address any of you who are feeling brain chaos because sometimes the circumstances in our life cause our brains to get triggered and go crazy. I want to help because that is my area of expertise. We've had lots of people coming to us wanting coaching, requesting coaching, signing up for coaching.

This is a time for coaches to do their best work. This is a time for me to help in any way that I can all of you. I have got you. I understand the brain and I understand what's happening to many people's brains. I can help everything settle down and I can give you some ways to think about this, some ways to help the people in your community that maybe don't have the model, that haven't listened to this podcast. I'm going to help you help them. I'm going to help you help yourself.

The first thing that I want to say and the first thing that I want to remind everybody about is that without thoughts there is no fear. It's very, very, very important to understand that there's the facts that are neutral in the world. There are the things that are happening in the world that are facts, and then there's how you think about them, and then there's how you feel and how you respond.

I believe that new uncertain thoughts about circumstances are always opportunities for us to work on our minds, to get stronger, and to embrace the experience of being human. If you look at all of humanity, there have always been experiences presented to the humans that create emotion, that create thoughts, that create emotion that need to be managed. All through history it has been the same. It's no different today than it has been in terms of what we need to do to manage our minds.

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Especially in this circumstance that we're going through, where there seems to be so much chaos in the world, it's very important to stop and acknowledge the simple fact that there are facts in the world, and there are thoughts in our brain and only one of them cause us to freak out. No matter what the circumstance is, it's always the thought that causes us to freak out. It's very important for us to take back the power of our thinking, to own it and to make it a choice for us, to use it as an opportunity to make our mental health stronger. We don't get stronger by doing easy things, we get stronger by doing hard things, so here is our opportunity to utilize this situation in our life right now. Even though it's uncertain, even though it's different, even though it's collective, it's an opportunity for us to really practice the skills that will make our lives free from unnecessary suffering.

One of the things that I want to have you look at by stepping back from all of this, is I want you to notice how much collective emotion is being created by collective thinking. When you look at, say, for the stock market... I'm always fascinated by the stock market because, of course, I love money and I love the stock market and I love to see how thinking affects it. When you look at the economics of the stock market and you look at what it goes up and down based on, it's fascinating to see that most of what you're seeing with the stock market is an effect of thinking. It's not an effect of an equal causation in the situation, right? It's people thinking and anticipating and selling in a frenzy because of what's going on in their brain, and then to see the effect of that in the world to me... The reason it's so fascinating is it just shows what our brains make things mean.

I had someone the other day say, 'Okay, I understand the model.' This was actually a client said this to one of my other coaches. "I understand the model and understand that that applies to our lives. But this is a very serious situation, this is different." What I want offers is, no, this is not different. This is the human experience. This is our life. This is our brain on life, right? And so we can take back as much control as we can by managing our minds. Just like the stock market is reflecting our thinking, our feelings, and the way we're feeling, are also reflecting our thinking. If

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you're feeling panicked, if you're feeling chaotic, if you're feeling frustrated, if you're feeling mad, oh I've heard it from everyone, if you're feeling burdened.

So many of my clients, their kids' schools have been canceled. They don't have childcare. They have to do their jobs. There's so many things going on, right, that seem like they're causing our emotions. When we slow down, we can recognize, "Okay, none of that is causing my emotion, it's how I'm thinking about it." That doesn't mean I'm to blame or that it's my fault or that I'm doing it wrong. On the contrary, all it means is that you're a human being with a brain. Now, we have to remember that the brain is always seeking things that startle it. It is looking for danger. When there is a constant feed, literally, of dangerous thinking that is available to us, you have a terrible combination. Think about this, the brain is like, "Where's the danger? Where's the danger? I need to hear about the danger. I need to know about the nature. I need to know exactly what's going on with the danger." That's your brain doing well. That's your brain doing life right for your brain, right? Its main focus is survival.

And then you have a media in our country that is doing their job, which is to get people to listen, to get ratings. You have to remember our news is about trying to get the attention of the people and get them to turn on the TV or read the article or pay attention. So when you have this combination of brain looking for danger and a media providing a steady stream of startling information in order to get your attention, and then it's a constant feed of that, what happens is it goes into the background of your brain and just keeps telling you how much danger you're in. That's what's happening collectively to so many of us, right? We're like, "Oh my gosh, I need to know what's going on. I need to know all the scary things that are going on," that's normal, "and I need to know them every second of every day." And so we're feeding them into our brain and those are the thoughts that we're thinking.

We're actually delegating our thinking to, literally, companies whose job is to provide us with thoughts and feelings of being startled. Step one and my

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first recommendation for handling chaos is to limit your exposure to the feed. I'm not saying you should put your head in the sand and not know what's going on, but what I'm saying is you need to understand that your brain is literally going to get addicted to anything that spells danger and that is "life-threatening." If you look at your life right now, and you look at the thoughts that you're having, you will notice that without any of those thoughts everything's fine with you right now.

Everything's fine. Your brain doesn't think that thought is important, right, doesn't think that the fact that you're sitting in a chair or standing up or lying down, breathing is important. It's not relevant. What's relevant are all these scary things going on, are the fact that this was canceled, and that this is going on with the job, and this is going on with the people, and this is going on with government. This is what's important. Stop thinking about being fine because if you do, you'll die, and start thinking about all the scary things. What I want to offer is that our brains are not designed for a constant feed from your phone. They're not designed for the constant feed of danger. We have to consciously decide to feed our brains with other inputs, with other things, at least in equal measure. At least an equal measure is what I'm saying.

I have friends that just really love to watch the news and I said, "Okay, listen, if you want to watch the news for an hour, then you need to listen to a positive podcast for an hour, or you need to get a coaching session for an hour." For some of us that really is the truest form of releasing suffering, is just being able to get on a call with a coach and unload all of the inputs, unload all of the thoughts. Because what happens is you watch the news and they tell you what to think, and then you mix it with your own brain and create a terrifying cocktail of thoughts. When you go to a coaching session, you basically just unload it, it's like cleaning out the house, and then we can place in the thoughts that we want to have. Worrying thoughts, terrifying thoughts, feel necessary and useful, but they're not necessary and useful.

You can take precautions, you can make decisions, you can do things for your own safety from a place of love and caring and compassion, not from

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a place of panic. That's what I want to recommend to you here. I want you to see the situation as an opportunity for you to either move towards fear or away from fear, towards love or away from love. It's hard to remember that that is an option because we feel in many times when we're listening to this constant feed, we feel powerless. We can't control what's going on in the world. We can't control the stock market or what's going on with the virus or what's going on with the schools and the cancellations. All of a sudden we feel like we're completely out of control. When we feel that way, when we think that way, we stop thinking on purpose, and that is the worst possible thing that we can do.

We have to decide what we want to think on purpose. This is a time where you can reveal yourself to yourself. This is an opportunity for you to open up to your experience of humanity. The inclination will be to shut down. The inclination will be to resist. The inclination will be to buffer and not feel. The temptation to indulge in suffering is high. Even though it's counterintuitive, it's a very tempting thing to do because the brain thinks it's important. "Freak out right now. Get the adrenaline going, run. This seems dangerous, run." But we're not running, we're sitting here freaking out in place and feeding our brain more startling facts, more startling things. Of course, they're not startling facts because facts aren't startling, but they're startling thoughts about facts, right? Make sure you make that differentiation.

Here's what I want to offer to all of you, I'm going to be doing a daily podcast to help you handle the chaos. I'm going to keep coming into your ear and providing that alternate input to you. I feel really strongly that I want to offer coaching to as many people as possible. I'm going to be coaching people in Scholars, and for those that volunteer and are willing, I'm going to share some of those coaching sessions here in the hopes that they will help you on maybe some of the same topics. If you're in Scholars, I want to highly recommend that you use your weekly coaching. Super important, not just for you, but for how you show up in the world and present yourself to other people who may be freaking out. My suggestion is that you feel your feelings even though you know you're causing them, right? If you're feeling

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afraid, if you're feeling anxious and you recognize, "Okay, that's coming from my thoughts." That next thing to say is, "Okay, well, if it's coming from your thoughts, you shouldn't be feeling that way. That's not true."

Your brain is triggering those feelings because of your thoughts, because it thinks that it's important. It's not important for you to sit in anxiety that's not helping you, to panic inside your own body is not helping you. It's not helping the world. It's not helping anything, right? Processing those emotions through, very important, feeling your feelings all the way through, very important. That's one, feel your feelings. Number two is knowing your thoughts, knowing what's going on in your brain and making sure you're separating that out from the facts. The facts don't come from the news, the facts come from you whittling down all of your thoughts to only things that are absolutely neutral and provable, everything else is a thought.

I want to highly recommend number three, that you get coaching and that you write down what is in your brain. So many of my clients right now are trying not to buffer over this., trying not to use it as an excuse to indulge. I'm talking to a lot of you in Scholars. They're having really high anxiety and the way that you want to deal with that anxiety is by overeating or overdrinking or taking too many medications, those sorts of things. What I want to recommend is, listen, you can find an excuse to do that, you can find a reason to do that, you can indulge in that. Or you can use this as an opportunity to escalate the way you manage your mind, to use this as the deepest work to manage your mind at the highest level.

If you are a coach, if you are one of my coaches, it is our time to offer help. I have lots of people who maybe had never wanted to coach before that want coaching now. We need all hands on deck. We need people to get coaching. We need to help people manage their brains. It's more important now than it was earlier, to help people get clear on that. If you have a lot of excess energy, if you're a coach, even if you're not a coach, you're just someone in the world that has so much of this input that's producing a lot of anxiety and panic and excess energy, I want you to ask yourself how you can use that energy to help. How can you be part of the solution? That is

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one of the questions that I have been asking, is how can I help? How can I be part of the solution? Where am I needed? How can I show up there?

One of my tips is not to look to others to decide how to feel. This is very common and you don't even realize that you're doing it. You're looking around yourself, you're looking in other people's eyes, you're looking on the news, you're looking on the internet, how should I be feeling about this? That's not a good question. It's not good to look to other people to define your emotional life. You need to step back and decide how you want to think about it.

For me, what's the most useful, and this is just for me personally, is to go to the worst-case scenario, which to me is always death, right? Death is always the worst-case scenario, my death, dying, and recognizing that that is something that's inevitable for all of us, and that I have from now until that time to be who I want to be. That may be sooner and it may be later, but panicking about when that is going to be and freaking out about when that is going to be and trying to control, in a way that I don't have control when that's going to be, doesn't serve anyone, mostly me. If I can drop into that and make peace with it, I'm not afraid. I'm not afraid when I think that way. I'm not afraid when I recognize that I get to decide what I want to think in every single moment. What are the facts? Recognizing that the facts are always neutral, and then recognizing my feelings and feeling them through, and then deciding what I want to think on purpose.

I'm going to come back and be in your ear tomorrow. I've asked all of my coaches, who are in my Slack channel, who are currently coaching in Scholars like crazy, I've asked them to share any insights and useful tips, anything that's working for them and their clients in this time and I will be sharing those with you. I will be coaching people in Scholars and asking them to record some of those sessions and we'll publish some of them here and share some of those insights.

I'm also asking you, if you are in Scholars, to go to the Ask A Coach section and to ask any questions about what's going on in the world right

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now, what's going on in your life right now, that you would like me to help answer how to coach yourself through, and how to find a place of calmness. I want to leave you and offer this, it's okay to be calm right now. It's okay to make the decision to be calm. It is useful to be calm right now. Whatever's going on in the world, it's okay for you to have thoughts about it, that keep you calm, and keep you smart, and keep you thinking about how to respond instead of how to react.

I'm here to help you. I've got you. The model's always there for you. Let me know what you need help with. Post it in Scholars, post it in the Ask A Coach section. If you're not in Scholars, don't worry. We're all freaking out about the same things, so your question will most likely get asked in there and I'll be able to answer it. Let's start putting our minds to positive contribution to our life, a true awareness and understanding of what it means to be human, and to recognize that this is part of our journey right now. If we close down to it, we will panic and freak out. If we open up to it, we will learn so much about ourselves and so much about our fellow humans.

What I notice is that when we take back control of our own minds and make decisions, that there's so much beauty in the world, even during these kinds of times. There's so much love and so much beauty and so much compassion and so much support. I feel it more in my community right now than I ever have. Ever. People rallying together and supporting each other and helping each other, that's what I'm calling myself to do and that's what I'm recommending you do just because it feels so great. All right, my friends, do your coaching, limit your inputs from the news and I will talk to you tomorrow.

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